City of Bellevue

Calculating Building Height
in the Transition Area Design District

Development Services
Handout **L-10**

July 2006

Note: This handout applies only to structures located in the Transition Area Design District. For calculating building height in the Shoreline Overlay District, see Handout L-11. If your structure is not located in either of these districts, see Handout L-9, Calculating Building Height.

How is building height measured in the Transition Area Design District?

For structures in the Transition Area Design District, building height is measured from the average existing grade around the building, or in some cases around a building segment, to the highest point of a flat roof, excluding parapet, or to the mid-point between the eaves and ridge of a pitched roof (figure 1).
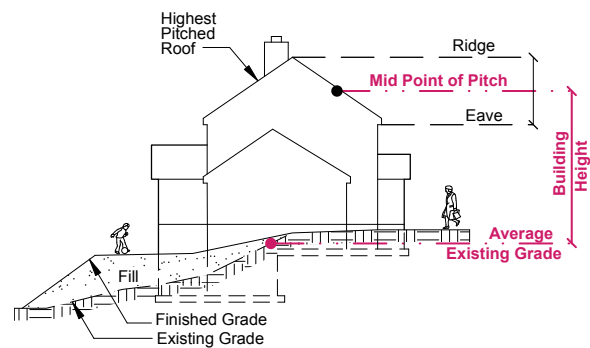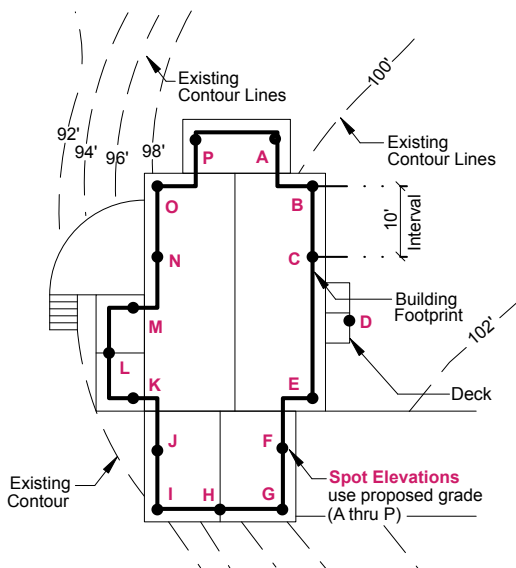
Measuring Building Height
(figure 1)

Determining Average Existing Grade
(figure 2)

How do I determine Average Existing Grade?

Step 1: Provide an accurate scaled drawing of the building fooootprint on the site. The drawing must show the existing topography (using contour lines at 2' intervals).

Step 2: Show points on the drawing every 10' around the building footprint. For each point, provide spot elevations of the topography as it exists today.

Step 3: Add up all of the existing grade spot elevations, and divide by the quantity of those spot elevations. This gives you your average existing grade (figure 2).

Calculating the Average Existing Grade
  (add all spot elevations)

$$\frac{\text{A thru P}}{16} = \text{Average Existing Grade}$$

(divide by # of spot elevs.)

How do I determine if my proposed structure complies with the permitted height limit?

Subtract the average existing grade from the highest point of a flat roof or from the mean height between the ridge and eaves of a pitched roof (figure 1). If the result does not exceed the allowable height limit, the structure complies.

What if my building has several pitched roof sections with different ridge and eave elevations?

You would measure to the mid point between the highest ridge and the highest eave (figure 3).

How do I determine if a building on a sloping site that is composed of building segments complies with the permitted building height?

For building segment #1 determine the elevation of the highest point of the roof, if it is a flat roof, or the mean height between the ridge and eave, if it is a pitched roof. Subtract the average existing grade for segment #1 from the roof elevation for segment #1. Then repeat this process for each numbered segment.
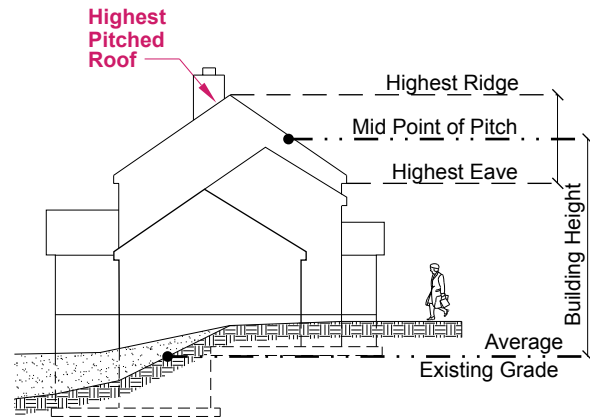
Multiple Pitched Roofs
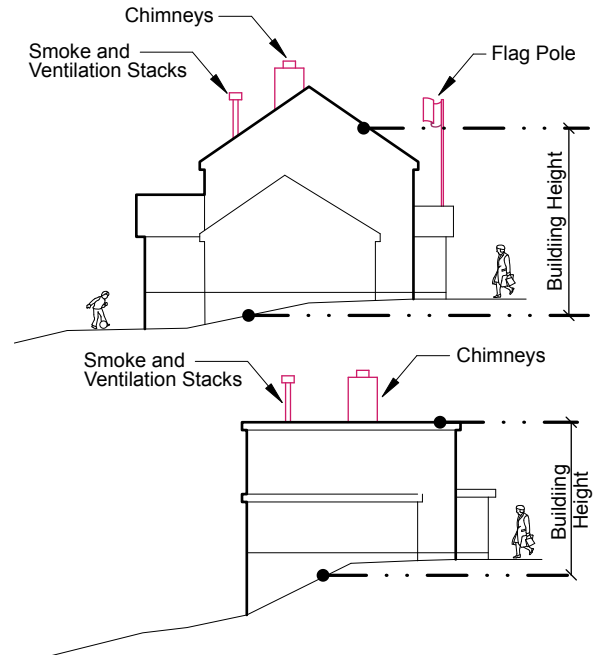(figure 3)
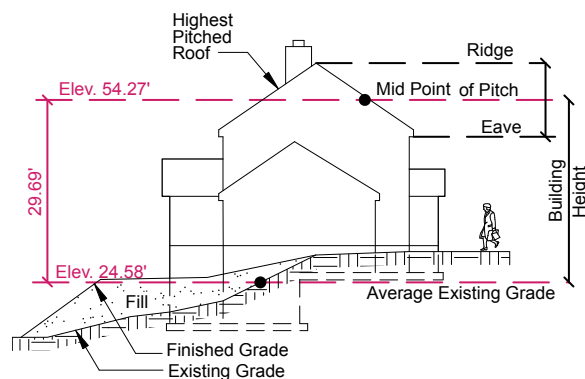
Building Height
(figure 4)

How do I illustrate proposed building height?

Provide a building elevation drawing that portrays the average existing grade elevation and the elevation of a flat roof, excluding parapet, or the elevation of the mid-point of a pitched roof (between the eaves and the ridge of the highest pitch). Show the ridge, mid-point, and eave. See figure 4.

Are any building features excluded from building height calculations?

Only slender structural elements not intended for human habitation and not exceeding 10 feet above the maximum building height are excluded. Examples are:

- Chimneys
- Omnidirectional (whip) antennas
- Smoke and ventilation stacks
- Flag poles
- Mechanical equipment/screening

Excluded Building Features
(figure 5)

Where can I get additional information?

- Land Use Code 20.25B.040.A, *Transition Area Building Height*
- Land Use Code 20.50.012, Definition of *Building Height* and *Building Segment*
- Land Use Code, Dimensional Requirements Chart

This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or for other city codes, such as the Construction Codes. Additional information is available from Development Services at Bellevue City Hall or on the city website at www.bellevuewa.gov.

For land use regulations that may apply to your project, contact the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services. Phone: 425-452-4188. E-mail: landusereview@ci.bellevue.wa.us. Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711.